



# Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

## *Voluntary Habitat Restoration on Private Lands in Alaska*



Using proven bio-stabilization techniques, a Partners for Fish and Wildlife project restored and provided long-term protection for this Willow Creek stream bank property. "Before" photo above courtesy Dan and Starr DelCupp, landowners. "After" photo at right by USFWS.



### What is the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program?

The Partners program works with private and other non-federal landowners who wish to voluntarily restore fish and wildlife habitats on their land. The program emphasizes re-establishment of native vegetation and natural ecological systems. These improvements are designed to benefit fish and wildlife while meeting the needs and desires of private landowners.



### Habitat Restoration Benefits Fish and Wildlife Resources

A national program, Partners for Fish and Wildlife was introduced to Alaska in 1995. Since then the program's partnerships have resulted in significant habitat restoration in over 200 project sites on non-federal lands in Alaska.

Most of the projects to date have focused on restoration of wetlands, stream banks, riparian areas, and in-stream habitats. These restored habitats now provide important food, cover, and breeding and rearing areas for fish, mammals, and migratory birds

such as waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and birds of prey.

### Habitat Restoration Benefits Landowners and the Public

Restoration of fish and wildlife habitats promotes:

- Stabilization of property loss due to erosion
- Sustainable populations of native fish, wildlife, and plants
- Improved water quality and watershed health
- Reduced non-point source pollution
- Enhanced aesthetics and recreation benefits

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program offers technical and financial assistance to landowners to protect or restore habitat on private, municipal or borough lands. Once a project is approved through a competitive

*This Big Lake family partnered with the Service to restore their eroded lake-front property. Photo courtesy Herold Sherman, landowner.*

process, the Service normally pays up to 50 percent of project costs. Landowners may also receive assistance from a wide variety of other partners, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), State natural resource agencies, Native groups, schools, businesses, and local interest groups. The landowner's cost share may be in cash, or "in kind" contributions of materials, services, or labor.

As vital habitats on private lands are restored, trust and cooperative partnerships between private landowners and the Service are strengthened. Across the nation, private landowners are the stewards of the vast majority of fish and wildlife habitats today. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program provides a win-win solution, because it protects and enhances fish and wildlife resources while maintaining or increasing private land values.

### Successful Alaskan Projects

#### Take Many Forms

Restoration projects include, but are not limited to:

- Stream bank restoration and protection (revegetation, setbacks, light-penetrating walkways, exclusion of livestock from waterbodies)
- Removal or replacement of structures detrimental to fish passage (bulkheads, perched or undersized culverts)
- Restoration of natural water flow in wetlands
- Wildlife habitat restoration or enhancement (creation of nesting platforms or snags, browse improvement, prescribed burning)
- Fish habitat improvement (creation of off-channel rearing ponds, instream cover, or connections between wetlands)

### Over 200 Restoration Projects Have Been Implemented State-wide!

The Service worked with the Municipality of Anchorage, Enstar Natural Gas Company, and a local restaurant to stabilize a seriously eroding stream bank and restore salmon and Dolly Varden fish habitat along Campbell Creek in Anchorage.

Private home-owners, neighbors, a Native corporation, and NRCS partnered with the Service to restore over 1,500 feet of Chena River shoreline in Interior Alaska, providing riparian habitat for fish and wildlife while protecting property values.

A condo association, watershed partnership, and the City and Borough of Juneau are partnering with the Service to reduce Duck Creek flooding in residential areas and remove a barrier to fish passage by replacing a culvert and road with a bridge and then revegetating the stream bank.

In the last 6 years, 175 Partners projects have restored and protected Kenai River habitat with nearly 6,000 feet of elevated light-penetrating walkways, 2 miles of cabled spruce tree revetments, nearly 2 miles of restored river bank, and 31 access stairways.

### The Program is Responsive, Stream-lined, and Flexible

Assistance offered by the Service to private landowners ranges from informal advice on the design and location of potential restoration projects to design and cost-sharing of these projects.

To encourage participation and help ensure success, the Partners program is designed to be short on paperwork and long on success. A unique and voluntary cooperative agreement is developed specifically for the participating landowner, and will run for a minimum of 10 years.

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*Draft horses were used instead of heavy equipment to return wood to a portion of Wasilla Creek, restoring vital complexity to salmon stream habitat. The landowner also partnered with the Service to fence and exclude cattle from a portion of the creek. USFWS Photo by Maureen de Zeeuw*



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**For more information, please contact our Alaska Region Coordinator Mike Roy at 907/786 3925**

**Visit the Partners for Fish and Wildlife home page at: [www.fws.gov/r9dhc/fw](http://www.fws.gov/r9dhc/fw)  
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